Title of Lesson: What is the essential Gandhi?

Lesson By: Donna M. Hicks

Grade Level/ Subject Areas: 7th grade social studies
Class Size: 25-30

Time/ Duration of Lesson: 1-2 50 minute periods

Goals/ Objectives of Lesson:
- Students will display an understanding of the essential teachings of Gandhi.
- Students will work cooperatively to provide a review of Gandhi’s teachings and to enhance each other’s understanding of Gandhi’s teachings
- Students will have an opportunity to develop one personal goal and a mutually agreed upon group service project modeled on the teachings of Gandhi

Lesson Abstract:
This will be a culminating lesson of a unit of study involving the teachings of Gandhi and his relevance to the 21st century. Students will do this in small groups using discussion and representing their discussion visually.

Following a review of historical applications, students will be assigned a format of their chose to create a final project entitled “The Essential Gandhi”. A second component to the project will be a real life application of Gandhi’s principles as determined by each individual student.

Lesson Content:
Gandhi’s teachings are relevant historically and to our lives as we enter the 21st century. Some of the major components of his teaching involved the concepts of: Ahimsa; nonviolence with truth and love, Satyagraha; insistence on truth through love and compassion, Swaraj; home rule, and Sarvodaya; well being of all. Gandhi used his life to experiment with personal, social, economic, and political beliefs. “His life was his message.” Some of his personal experiments involved diet and medicine. He was influenced by the works of several including: Thoreau, Ruskin, Tolstoy, and the foundations of Jainism. He was an avid reader and writer and acted as the editor of the Newspaper, “Young India”. Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King spent time with Gandhi and were inspired by his teachings and duplicated many of his ideas. In his mind, violence resulted from poverty, injustice, lack of self-discipline, selfishness, and ill feelings towards others. He felt the ideal civilization promoted love, truthfulness, social service, equality”. His idea of constructiveness; programs brought forth by the community to improve the life of all was emulated frequently.

The following visuals (graphic organizers) were created by Tara and Nirmal Sethia and teachers at the Ahimsa Center Summer Institute at Cal Poly Pomona in 2007. The visuals represent an attempt to summarize the essential Gandhi. They will be shared with students after their initial brainstorming.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief in education</th>
<th>Satyagraha (Soul Force)</th>
<th>“Do the Right Thing”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taught by example</td>
<td>Constantly sought the truth</td>
<td>Ever changing/always learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked for the good in everyone</td>
<td>Courageous/fearless</td>
<td>AHIMSA=Nonviolence with truth and love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model for others</td>
<td>Disliked the bad actions, not the person</td>
<td>No ego “He’s not all that”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graphic Organizers – The Essential Gandhi**

- **Step 1:** Communicate
- **Step 2:** Mobilize & Demonstrate
- **Step 3:** Non-Cooperation
- **Step 4:** Work Together

Gandhi = Non-Violence in Thoughts + Words + Deeds
Gandhi’s Influence – Three Examples
(Students will have been exposed to these three examples of Gandhi’s influence in previous lessons. This is added to the graphic organizers as a means of reviewing previous lessons. It may not be relevant to this specific lesson depending on the content your students have covered.)

Truth was the essence of Gandhi’s Teachings
The Essential Gandhi

- Had vision with action/activist
- Seeker through life
- Grew from experience/reflection on experiences
- Human
- Dignity of all/message of hope
- Researcher, experimenter, writer
- Visionary
- Believed in the inherent goodness of people
- Nonviolence was infinitely superior to violence

State Content Standards: Taken from Michigan Standards for 7th grade Social Studies

- VI.3MS.1 Compose essays expressing decisions on national and international policy issues.
- II.2MS.4 Explain how humans modify the environment and describe some of the possible consequences of those modifications.
- II.5MS.1 Describe how social and scientific changes in regions may have global consequences.
### Guiding Questions:
- How would you distinguish essential from non-essential?
- What are the essential ideas of Gandhi?
- What are some applications of his ideas in history?
- Is there a way you and I can incorporate the teachings of Gandhi into our personal and public life?

### Materials Needed:
- Projection Technology to display group brainstorming sheets or butcher block paper.
- Markers
- Group copies of previously produced graphic organizers
- Project/Essay Rubric
- At a later date, share personal and group service ideas.
- Vote as a group for the service project the group will undertake

### Lesson Context:
This will be used as a culminating activity involving the life and message of Gandhi. Students will have been exposed to Gandhi’s life, teachings, and historical significance in several other previous lessons including an intensive study of the Independence Campaign in India with incorporation of Gandhi’s basic teachings of Ahimsa, Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, and Swaraj. Students will have studied the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, and Apartheid in South Africa. Students will also have been involved on an experiential level to many of Gandhi’s teachings through the national “Challenge Day’ program. The lesson is meant to lead to personal and group service activities.

### Teaching Activities:
- Discuss the term essential in the context of the definition meaning basic, most important ideas related to Gandhi
- Allow time for small groups to brainstorm the essential Gandhi and develop a visual.
- Request a group to volunteer to review their group process in a “Fishbowl” activity
- Display all group brainstorming sheets along with teacher created visuals
- Review the project/essay rubric
- Have each student copy the visual or combinations of the visuals that they will use for the essay or project
- At the time when projects are turned in, share personal and group service ideas and vote on a group service project to pursue

### Assessment/ Evaluation: (how students will be evaluated or show mastery)
Students are able to summarize the essential elements of Gandhi’s life and teaching in their chose of an essay or a student chosen project. Students are able to identify one personal goal as well as one service project applying Gandhi’s principles.
**Extension Activities/ Enrichment:**
After sharing the final projects in small groups, the class will determine a service project based on the ideas shared.

**Bibliography:**

**Challenge Day Program.** [www.challengeday.org](http://www.challengeday.org)


Sethia, Nirmal. “Ahimsa based Economics: A Gandhian Perspective” (Lecture)
